

UNDER A DARKENING SKY

all took a solemn oath that, if the Crusade really started, they would go, and Raimondo returned to Catherine with their signed and sealed promises to this effect.¹

In August, the Florentines elected eight magistrates, two for each quarter of the city, known as the *Otto della Balla*, or *Otto della Guerra*, to carry on the conflict with the Church. These included representatives of each order in the State : one noble, Alessandro de' Bardi; one artisan, Giovanni di Mone; six burghers, Giovanni Dini, Giovanni Megalotti, Andrea Salviati, Tommaso Strozzi, Guccio Gucci, Matteo Soldi. They were all men of mark, able and experienced, animated by sincere patriotism, haters of the prepotency of the Parte Guelfa ; such popularity did they acquire by their energetic management of the task committed to them, that they were called the *Otto San ft.* Eight other officials, known as the *Otto di livelli*, were appointed, to tax the clergy and the churches for the defence of the city.² Mercenaries were hired, German cavalry obtained from Bernabo, and a German condottiere, Conrad Wertinger, who was in the service of Galeazzo Visconti, was elected captain-general of the forces of the Republic. The Abbot of Marmoutier having arrested the Florentine ambassador at Perugia, the Florentines seized and imprisoned the papal nuncio, Luca Bertini, Bishop of Narni, who was returning from Avignon to the Patrimony.⁸

¹ Letter 140 (220).

* Cf. Gherardi, *op.* «'/.», p. 23 ; Marchionne Stefani, Lib. IX. rubr. 752, 753 ; and, for a hostile contemporary view of " citizens who had such presumption as to consent to be called *sattti*" Sercambi, *Croniche*, I. p. 213.

⁸ Cf. Raynaldus, vii. p. 279 ; *Qronica Sattese*, col. 246. The statement made by Augusta Drane (I. p. 347), and copied from her by more recent writers, that " the mad Ghibelline mob, encouraged by their ' Eight Saints,' after slaughtering the inquisitors, seized the papal nuncio and flayed him alive in the streets of Florence," is entirely inaccurate. The papal bull (Raynaldus, *he. cit.*) merely says that the nuncio was *aliqjiandiu crudelissimo carcere detentus*. For an account of this personage, who was afterwards Bishop of Siena, see G. A. Pecci, *Storia del Vtscovado di Siena*, pp. 288-290. Augusta Drane has, perhaps, confused him with the monk Niccoli who had been so horribly put to death, probably unjustly, for the affair of Prato.

